

National Aeronautics and  
Space Administration

**Headquarters**

Washington, DC 20546-0001



Reply to Attn of:

Office of Legislative Affairs  
AD:tg

APR 5 2006

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD**

**Subject:** Hearing before the House Science Committee regarding NASA's FY 2007  
Budget Request for the Science Mission Directorate; March 2, 2006,

**Members Present:** See Attached

**Witnesses:**

- Dr. Mary Cleave, NASA Associate Administrator, Science Mission Directorate
- Dr. Fran Bagenal, Member, Professor of Astrophysical and Planetary Sciences, University of Colorado and Panel Member National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey for Sun-Earth Connections
- Dr. Wesley Huntress, Jr., Director, Geophysical Laboratory, Carnegie Institution of Washington and Panel Member, National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey for Solar System Exploration
- Dr. Berrien Moore III, Director, University Distinguished Professor, Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, University of New Hampshire and Co-Chairman, National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey for Earth Sciences
- Dr. Joseph H Taylor, Jr., James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of Physics, Princeton University and Co-Chairman, National Academy of Sciences Decadal Survey for Astrophysics

**Hearing Summary:**

On March 2, 2006, the House Science Committee held a hearing to examine the NASA FY 2007 Budget Request for the Science Mission Directorate and how that budget would affect research in space and Earth science. Dr. Mary Cleave testified on behalf of NASA. Other witnesses included four representatives from the science community who have participated in or chaired National Academy of Sciences Decadal Reviews for NASA's Science Mission Directorate major themes. In general, Members were concerned with the proposed budget reductions in FY 2007 to NASA's Research & Analysis (R&A) program; the status of NASA's plans to review the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) program; and the proposed reduction in the level of funding growth for NASA's science programs over the next ten years.

### **Summary of Member Opening Remarks:**

**Chairman Boehlert (R-NY)** expressed his desire to have all witnesses to engage in a conversation regarding the FY 2007 Budget Request for NASA's Science Mission Directorate. He continued by saying that he wanted to specifically discuss why the four non-NASA witnesses felt that NASA had gotten it wrong by preserving flagship missions while cutting smaller missions and research grants and whether or not NASA had made the right decisions on what to cancel or defer. Chairman Boehlert also stated his desire to find out what research the scientists are pursuing

**Ranking Democrat Gordon (D-TN)** stated that although promises were made to fund a robust science program with an impressive set of missions, this has not happened. He also stated that NASA's life science and microgravity research programs have been decimated over the last two years and funding for the ISS research has been cut back to the point where it is unclear exactly what use NASA intends to make of the ISS. Gordon also listed cuts in R&A, SOFIA, Beyond Einstein, and the Explorer program as areas of concern. He also asked Dr. Cleave to shed some light on the plans for science funding beyond this budget request and asked for assurances that money would not be moved out of the space and Earth science programs, as in years past.

**Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Chairman Calvert (R-CA)** called on Congress to fund the Vision and the Crew Exploration Vehicle at the budget request level, discussed the funding levels for NASA and the science programs, and stated the need to maximize the money in a lean budget year.

**Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Ranking Democrat Udall (D-CO)** stated that he was troubled by cuts in science programs during the first two years of the implementing the Vision for Space Exploration. He went on to say that the cuts were damaging university-based research that will train the next generation of scientists. He also stated that the reductions to the R&A budget were "ill-advised" and asked Dr. Cleave to report on her review of the reductions to R&A funding.

### **Summary of Major Questions/Discussions:**

**Chairman Boehlert (R-NY)** asked the panel to respond to the question, "if NASA science were to get no more than the FY 2007 request, would you be willing to delay or alter the flagship mission of your science field to put more money back into smaller missions and research and analysis?" Chairman Boehlert also asked the panel if they would be willing to move money out of their own flagship program to put more money into research and analysis.

**Ranking Democrat Gordon (D-TN)** was concerned about preserving flagship missions at the cost of research. Asked what is the impact of reductions or slowing down of the flagship in terms of how much it would really make funds available? Was there an internal discussion within NASA about delaying or doing away with flagship missions? Dr. Cleave said that there were a lot of discussions and that the goal was balance, adding that NASA tried to be guided by decadal studies.

**Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Chairman Calvert (R-CA)** said that as a Member of the Armed Services Committee, they receive a detailed budget as well as a list of programs that are unfunded priorities and asked the panel if the listing of unfunded priorities is a good thing for

NASA to do when it presents its budget to Congress. He also pointed out that the changing of priorities over time is causing the agency to pull money from one area to finish out another. He said this was a problem and cited JWST as an example.

**Congressman Green (D-TX)** would like to engage in a conversation on SOFIA with NASA and Rep. Hall. He also asked Dr. Cleave what factors NASA will look at that would help in determining whether to continue with SOFIA. Dr. Cleave said that there would be dialogue with our international partners and she hopes that a clear recommendation would emerge from those discussions.

**Congresswoman Hooley (D-OR)** asked where climate research ranked when formulating the budget proposal. How will the proposed budget affect NASA's work on climate change? What are the three most important things we need to do to ensure the Earth observation programs remain viable? How were the cuts on Earth Observation satellites coordinated with NOAA?

**Congresswoman Johnson (D-TX)**, referencing a statement Dr. Cleave made earlier in the hearing, asked how much of a reduction to the science budget would actually affect it? Dr. Cleave answered that the \$3 billion removed was mainly related to outyear growth in the program. She also stated that while R&A funding has been reduced, NASA will engage the community in a dialogue and determine if funding should be restored. Ms. Johnson then asked what the reduction of R&A funds does to research. Dr. Cleave responded that the impact of these reductions is that it causes delays and that funding was needed for return to flight, so the stress on the budget should be a one time occurrence.

**Congressman Hall (R-TX)** stated that even though one mission is 90 percent complete and over budget by a couple of hundred million dollars (SOFIA), it was close enough for government work. Dr. Cleave responded that NASA did not have confidence in the estimates for what it will cost to complete SOFIA. Hall also asked, is the structural modification of the fuselage is complete on JWST and is the telescope completely installed and functional? Who will make up the review team on SOFIA? Dr. Cleave answered that the team would be made up of internal employees and external people as well. Rep Hall asked who will render the final decision on SOFIA and Dr. Cleave indicated that she would make the final decision.

**Congressman Wu (D-OR)** made a statement outlining his dissatisfaction with the FY 2007 Budget Request, but asked no questions.

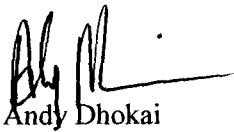
**Congressman Honda (D-CA)** asked why the budget for astrobiology was reduced. Specifically, Mr. Honda pointed out that the astrobiology cuts seemed out of sync with the "Life in the Universe" report issued by the National Research Council, and questioned why the budget request disregarded the findings of the report.

**Congressman Lipinski (D-IL)** expressed his interest in SOFIA, citing the University of Chicago's involvement. Specifically, he praised the University for reaching out to students in K through 12<sup>th</sup> grades and getting them interested in science and math. He also noted that the University was developing a camera that will produce some very sharp images. He later asked if it is unusual to zero out a program (like SOFIA) while it is under review. Mr. Lipinski also asked what would be shortchanged if a decision was made to shift the money over.

### **Requests for Information**

1. Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) requested data that support some of the decisions to delay missions because of Return to Flight.
2. Congressman Al Green (D-TX) asked to be included in any meetings with Congressman Ralph Hall (R-TX) regarding SOFIA.

A copy of the NASA written testimony can be found at the Office of Legislative Affairs website at <http://legislative.nasa.gov/>.



Andy Dhokai  
Legislative Affairs Specialist  
Office of Legislative Affairs

Attachment

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE  
Members Present at the Hearing on March 2, 20006

<b>Sherwood Boehlert, Chairman (R-NY)</b>	<b>Bart Gordon, Ranking Member (D-TN)</b>
Ken Calvert (R-CA)	Mark Udall (D-CO)
Ralph Hall (R-TX)	Darlene Hooley (D-OR)
Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA)	Al Green (D-TX)
Vernon Ehlers (R-MI)	Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
	Lynn Woolsey (D-CA)
	David Wu (D-OR)
	Michael Honda (D-CA)
	Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)